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Churches seek new evangelism avenues

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — A Southern Baptist congregation can help multiply the gospel among an unreached people group overseas — even before God has called a missionary to work there.

"How?" asked Michael Wright, pastor of Covington (Va.) Church, and a participant in the International Mission Board's (IMB) seventh annual Creative Access Networks (CAN) Conference in Richmond, Va.

Eighteen months ago, Wright led his church to "adopt" an unreached people group through the International Mission Board. The congregation committed to pray for the evangelization of a little-known ethnic minority in India.

"When we started, all we knew was the name of the group," Wright told the nearly 75 attendees of the CAN conference, designed to help Southern Baptist congregations get more personally involved in global missions.

For nearly a year, church members prayed God would call out someone to serve as a missionary among the group. A few weeks ago, Wright got word that a student at Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., had made a commitment to become the IMB strategy coordinator targeting the tribe.

"When I announced to the church that God had answered their request, it was like electricity going through our congregation," Wright said.

In July, the new strategy

coordinator will meet his prayer supporters at Covington Church — where a large banner displays the name of the people group as a prayer reminder.

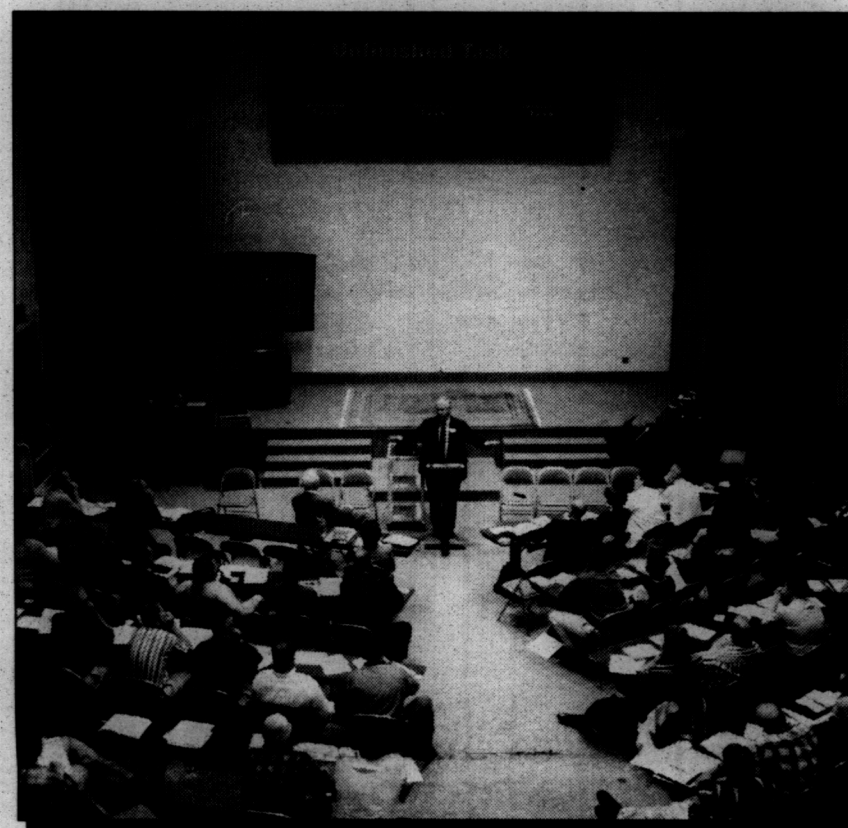
Covington, however, is just one example of how God has used Southern Baptist congregations to take the gospel to people who have never heard it before.

Almost three years ago, members of Westside Church, Gainesville, Fla., adopted an unreached people group in Asia. Since then, God has created an extensive network of relationships linking the church with other Christians who are trying to reach this group. Julie George, the church's evangelism coordinator, told CAN conference participants.

So far, Westside has sent prayerwalkers and medical volunteers to areas where members of this people group live. During a medical project led by Westside volunteers, several people accepted Christ.

Later, Westside members learned that an immigrant from this group — a believer living in California — had returned to his home village in Asia and found an evangelical church there. During his stay he led another 100 people to Christ. The village? The one where Westside medical volunteers had prayed and worked earlier.

That approach is right in line with the missions strategy recorded in the New Testament Book of Acts, said Henry Blackaby, author of the discipleship series, "Experiencing God."



UNFINISHED TASK — Local Southern Baptist churches play a key role in the unfinished task of taking the gospel to every person on earth, according to Henry Blackaby (center), author of the discipleship series "Experiencing God." During the 7th annual Creative Access Networks Conference at the International Mission Board in Richmond, Va., Blackaby urged local church leaders to lead their congregations to a deeper involvement in global missions. (BP photo by Roy M. Burroughs.)

"The early church had a deep sense of knowing not only theologically that God was on mission, but also that they were right in the middle of his being on mission," Blackaby told conference participants.

The IMB has created several new networks to help churches carry out the Great Commission their Lord has given them.

One is the Global Priority

Churches Network, which so far includes about 370 Southern Baptist congregations.

To learn more about adopting a people group for prayer (PrayerPlus), call (888) 462-7729 or e-mail prayerplus@imb.org.

To adopt a people group for church involvement beyond prayer (PeopleLink) call 1-877-462-4721 or e-mail peoplelink@imb.org.

LifeWay records 10M hits

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The Internet websites of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention received more than 10 million hits during the first quarter of 1999, the agency's webmaster, David Haywood, reported.

The number of people accessing the LifeWay sites at www.lifeway.com, he said, "has grown steadily since it was opened in October 1996. This has been due to the ongoing addition of LifeWay sites linked from the main address as well as the increase in the number of individuals and churches with Internet access."

Sites offered by LifeWay provide resources for Sunday School for adults, youth, children, and preschool, including "EXTRA! Teaching Helps," Centrifuge; Christian Growth Study Plan; Christian Single magazine; CrossSeekers; Crosspoint; discipleship; True Love Waits; Vacation Bible School; and Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Other related sites provide general information about LifeWay; news, including an on-line version of the agency's Facts & Trends journal; a listing of conferences; Southern Baptist statistics; employment opportunities at LifeWay; frequently asked questions; and daily devotions based on the "Experiencing God" calendar, published by Broadman & Holman.

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

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Looking back

10 years ago

Native Mississippian Ernie Myers, executive director of the Nevada Baptist Convention, is elected second vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention during the convention's annual session in Las Vegas. A native of Ruleville, Myers has served Nevada Baptists since 1978.

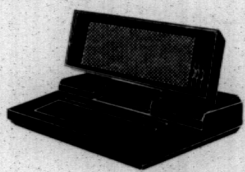
20 years ago

Adrian Rogers, pastor of 11,000-member Bellevue Church, Memphis, is elected president of the SBC on the first ballot over Robert Naylor, retired president of Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth; Abner McCall, president of Baylor University in Waco, Texas; and several other candidates.

50 years ago

Baptist nurses in training at Methodist Hospital in Hattiesburg have organized a Baptist Student Union. Officers were installed on June 15 at Main Street Church, Hattiesburg, following a parent-teacher supper. John Barnes, pastor of Main Street Church, brought the address.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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What does the future hold?

The 142nd session of the Southern Baptist Convention is history. Messengers came to Atlanta, tended to business, and returned home. In between, many voices lifted praise in many forms to the Lord.

After all, that's what Southern Baptists do best when they get together. The prayers were powerful, the preaching was motivational, and the music was inspired. Kingdom work was greatly magnified.

All in all, it was good to be in the House of the Lord with the believers who call themselves Southern Baptists — even if the

Georgia Dome isn't often used as a House of the Lord. The people of the Lord made up for that shortcoming.

However, it would have been a better sight if many more of those people of the Lord had attended. Registered messengers to the 1999 Southern Baptist Convention strained to break the 11,500 mark — in what could reasonably be considered a Southern Baptist stronghold.

In 1991, the Southern Baptist Convention met in Atlanta and registered almost 23,500 messengers. When the convention last met in Atlanta in 1995, more than 20,500 messengers were registered.

That's a 51% loss in messengers in less than a decade, and a 44% drop in only four years.

Likewise, attendance at many state Baptist conventions has declined in recent years. Associational leaders complain that it's becoming more and more difficult to get their people to turn out for annual meetings. Pastors are having much the same experience when it comes to the church's business meetings.

What gives? Where are the people and why aren't they attending?

Some people say our convention attendance figures are proportionately in line

with many other religious and even non-religious groups who are experiencing the same effect at their annual meetings — that there's no place left for centralized monoliths like denominations.

There is also the proposition that we are several years into a post-Christian era where materialism, false faiths, or no faith at all are nibbling away our corporate and individual commitments to spiritual matters.

Could it be, however, that we have simply been slow to pick up on the cultural ground that is changing beneath our feet? Could it be we have missed the signs that, like it or not, we'll be doing things much differently in the 21st century?

We are rapidly moving toward a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week society. In many ways, we're already there. There are very few goods and services that cannot be obtained when we want them, where we want them.

A person with the proper handheld electronic device can get a dial tone anywhere on the face of the earth. Ford and General Motors recently announced their long-term commitment to satellite-based radios in their new cars.

Sports fans can simultaneously tune in to every National Football League game every Sunday, thanks to their two-meter dishes in the back yard and television screens that display multiple programs at the same time.

Notably, all the sessions of the 1999 Southern Baptist Convention could be observed anywhere in the world, thanks to a live Internet feed provided by the North American Mission Board.

Maybe it's time we took a more serious



look at blending the best of the ongoing cultural revolution with the best of what makes us Southern Baptists and Mississippi Baptists.

There are unchanging truths of the faith on which we cannot compromise, but God has given this generation resources as never before to reach the world for Christ. We can show future generations how to make Jesus alive and relevant for their time, or we can keep doing things as we always have.

In other words, we can ride the wave of the future, or be swamped by it. The decision is ours.

Let's get busy!

GUEST OPINION



Adopt an annuitant Sunday observed

By Robin Nichols, representative
Southern Baptist Annuity Board

not set aside some of their own money each month, they could find a penniless retirement.

The Southern Baptist Cooperative Program provides more than \$1.1 million each year to the Annuity Board. All of that money is used for relief with most of it going to help those who have no Annuity

Board benefit at all.

For retirees receiving a small benefit, the Annuity Board offers assistance through the Adopt-An-Annuitant program. Direct gifts from individuals, Sunday School classes, groups, and churches provide an extra \$75 each month to more than 133 Mississippians and more

than 2,700 needy retirees nationwide. It takes \$2.5 million each year to meet the commitments made to those already on the rolls. Many more still need immediate assistance.

What can churches do? First, get the right information and participate in Adopt-An-Annuitant Sunday on June 27.

Get the congregation involved. Every church must be assertive and enroll their minister and staff members in the Church Annuity Plan. Also, begin by contributing to the Adopt-An-Annuitant endowment.

Annuity Board president O. S. Hawkins said, "It is the Annuity Board's commitment to increase the number of those receiving monthly benefits through the Adopt-An-Annuitant ministry. We encourage individuals and congregations to join us in extending God's hand to these faithful servants through this ministry."

Let us take the positive position by extending care and compassion to those who have retired and yet need our assistance.

Nichols can be contacted at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3227 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651. E-mail: rnichols@mbcb.org.

ADOPT AN ANNUITANT SUNDAY, JUNE 27

"Fulfilling the Promise" is my commitment

ANNUITY BOARD

Summer missionary drowns off Mexican coast

John Weems, 21, a student at Delta State University (DSU) serving as a Baptist Student Union (BSU) summer missionary in Mexico, died June 18 in a swimming accident.

Also killed were career Southern Baptist missionary Gary Sloan, 37, his daughter Carla, 11, and Joy Murphy, 19, a student summer missionary from Pelham, Ala.

The four died after being caught in a strong undertow on a beach at Tapachula, on Mexico's southern coast.

At first escaping the undertow, Sloan, Weems, and summer missionaries John Floyd of Crosby, Texas; David Pitts of Wewahatchka, Fla.; and Hannah Carter of Shreveport, La., returned to shore with Carla's body, but efforts to revive her failed.

Weems went back into the water to help the others and was caught in the undertow again, according to Mike McAleer, another Southern Baptist missionary in Mexico.

When Sloan saw Weems and Murphy struggling in the water, he went back out to help them. None made it back to shore.

Weems' body was recovered the next day.

Weems was a rising senior majoring in computer information systems with a minor in Spanish at Delta State. He was the son of Kay and Wesley Weems, both of Nacogdoches, Texas.

Weems had received an associate degree from Kilgore College in Texas, and had completed a year at DSU on a tennis scholarship.

According to Bill Kirkpatrick, Weems' BSU director at DSU in Cleveland, Weems had been named to the first team of the All Gulf South Conference for tennis. He was also awarded Most Valuable Statesman award in athletics for tennis.

Kirkpatrick noted Weems was to be on the BSU leadership team and would have

taught an "Experiencing God" course on campus this fall.



Weems

Kirkpatrick said, "His (John's) trying to go back and save lives speaks about the type of person he was. He just knew he needed to do that. That speaks well of his personal character and his faith in Christ."

On Weems' summer missions application, he wrote that during a mission trip to Montezuma,

Mexico, in 1996, "I wanted to stay there for the rest of the summer because so much needed to be done."

Jerry Merriman, director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Department of Student Work, said this was the first death of a student summer missionary on the mission field in the Mississippi program's 52 years. Mississippi Baptist students

appointed 143 of their number to serve in the U.S. and overseas this summer.

The International Mission Board had appointed Sloan and his wife Gloria, missionaries in June 1998. A native of Lufkin, Tex., Sloan was a general evangelist to Tapachula.

Murphy was a rising sophomore at the University of Montevallo in Alabama.

Sloan and his daughter were to be buried Monday in Tapachula. The bodies of the two summer missionaries were to be returned to the U.S.

Weems' funeral was to take place this week in Nacogdoches. The other three summer missionaries on the team were to return to the U.S.

(Story compiled by MBCB Communications Director Tim Nicholas and Baptist Press.)



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

Record

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SBC to bolster CP, city outreach program

ATLANTA (BP) — Southern Baptists began intensified efforts to strengthen their unified muscle — the Cooperative Program (CP) — and to use it in an invigorated way to reach people who have not heard the gospel not only abroad but also in the nation's megacities, as they met June 15-16 in Atlanta.

Introducing a "Partners in the Harvest" thrust to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Cooperative Program, Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Executive Committee, described the Cooperative Program as the "greatest voluntary funding program in the history of Christendom" involving an "alliance and partnership" between the SBC and state Baptist conventions in supporting missions and ministries globally as well as nationally.

Also of significant interest to Baptists at this year's annual meeting — the 142nd in the SBC's 154-year history — is the OK given by messengers to a study of the convention's statement of beliefs, the Baptist Faith and Message, a 1963 document expanded last year with an article on the family. A yet-to-be-appointed committee is to bring a report at next year's annual meeting, June 13-14 in Orlando, Fla.

Final registration totaled 11,554 for the 1999 annual meeting in Atlanta's Georgia Dome, shortened to two days, from the previous three, by action taken during last year's SBC sessions in Salt Lake City. Messengers were registered this year from all but three states.

"Southern Baptists, will you pray as never before?" SBC President Paige Patterson urged in his address to the convention. "Southern Baptists, will you go to the great population centers of our nation? Southern Baptists, will you give? Will you get your church to take a city? Will you ask your association to accept the challenge of the inner city? Southern Baptists, will you weep before God like Jesus wept over Jerusalem? ... May God grant it."

Reflecting a heightened SBC emphasis on the spiritual needs of the nation's cities, Patterson told messengers, "Brothers and sisters, if we reach the cities of our country, it will take more than an affirmation of belief in the inerrancy of the Bible." With 47 U.S. cities each numbering more than one million people, Patterson said the "great metropolises of our own nation have burgeoned into some of the world's most demanding mission assignments."

Also during the convention: ♦ The heartache of school violence was vented often while messengers were in Atlanta. Columbine High School shooting victim Rachel Joy Scott's father, Darrell, and brother Craig, spoke at a Saturday night youth concert and Sunday morning worship in Centennial Olympic Park.

♦ Efforts to change the name of the Southern Baptist Convention fell "overwhelmingly" short on a raised-hand show-of-ballots vote, as assessed by Patterson, on conducting a straw poll of messengers about the possible name of "International Baptist Convention." In floor debate, Barber contended a new name would bolster church planting and racial reconciliation, while messenger Jeff

Johnson of Grants, N.M., countered, "'Southern Baptist' is a term for a theology — not a term for a location. It is a term we've come to respect."

♦ Messengers endorsed an Executive Committee response to a referral to remove Orlando as the site of next year's annual meeting. By approving the committee report, which included the committee's "declines to act" response to the referral, the Orlando meeting was affirmed for next year. The location had become an issue in light of the SBC's vote in 1997 encouraging Baptists concerned about various anti-family practices of the Disney conglomerate not to patronize its far-flung businesses, including Walt Disney World in Orlando.



Centreville church gathers 25 tons of food

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

When word went out that Mississippi Baptists had been asked to once again collect food for the hungry, hurricane ravaged people of Honduras, Centreville Church in Mississippi Association took up the challenge.

After a three-week effort to collect food and donations in a project led by the Mississippi Baptist Men's Ministry Department and the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), the church was able to completely fill an 18-wheeler with 755 boxes of food.

At an average of 67.5 pounds per box, that's a total 50,827 pounds or 25.4 tons of food. In dollars, it represents over \$35,000, according to Tonya Curry, a camera-shy church member who kept careful count of the boxes during the loading process.

"Everybody kept trying to count the boxes and kept coming up with different totals, so this is going to be the official count," Curry said.

The second call for food was sent out as a joint effort of the state Men's Ministry Department and WMU.

The first call was made last fall, resulting in nearly one million tons of food being collected from Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana.

"The initial food supplies sent by our state and other agencies have now been depleted. With the planted crops not producing well, the Honduran people are faced with severe

food problems," said Jim Didlake, director

of Men's Ministries for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

The Centreville effort got its start from the letter Didlake and WMU director Kay Cassibry sent to churches, said Centreville pastor John Brashier.

"Our Brotherhood director, Greg Poole, called me and asked what our goal should be," he said. Since they had collected around 700 pounds of food the first time, Brashier thought a good goal would be to double that.

"I'll never forget what Gregg said to me: 'Is that a goal that man can do for God, or one that God can do through man?'"

"What could God do?, we wondered. We took it to the church at a business meeting and set three goals — one ton, 10 tons, and 100 tons. Then, when we started collecting food we decided that we didn't really need a goal. We would just collect as much as we could," Brashier said.

With the WMU and Brotherhood pushing it, soon the whole church was behind the project. "I've never seen a work ethic like what is in these people," Brashier said. "They give of themselves, don't gripe or complain. They have a real servant attitude."

One of the key organizers of the effort was Renee Priest. Her husband, Alan, drove the forklift loading the Dole Banana Company 18-wheeler parked on the street behind the church — and the Priests are not members of Centreville Church.

"Without her help all of this could not have been done," said Geneva Wheeler, Centreville Church WMU director.



AWAITING ANOTHER LOAD — Centreville Church pastor John Brashier (left) and Brotherhood president Greg Poole watch as the forklift brings another pallet of food boxes into the back of the cargo container. (Photo by Carl M White)



FOOD FOR HONDURANS — Greg Poole (left) and Chuck Jenkins of Centreville Church, Centreville, load one of 755 boxes of food into an 18-wheeler cargo container that will soon be on its way to Honduras. (Photo by Carl M. White)

WMU touts missions, honors retiring O'Brien

ATLANTA (Special) — Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) members highlighted both world missions and local participation during their annual meeting, June 13-14 at Atlanta's Wieuca Road Church.

The theme this year was "Strength for Today—Bright Hope for Tomorrow." Emphasis was placed on reviewing the past century in WMU history and activities, as this is the last national meeting of the WMU during this century.

The meeting was also Dellanna O'Brien's last as executive director. O'Brien, who retires this year, received a standing ovation when introduced at the meeting's opening session.

Another session recognized new programs initiated by O'Brien, who has led the 111-year-old auxiliary 10 years.

A committee reported to WMU's executive board that a search for O'Brien's successor is well underway. As of a June 1 deadline, the committee had received 15 recommendations, said Ann Coffman of Sanford, Fla., the committee chair.

Wanda Lee of Columbus, Ga., was re-elected WMU president by acclamation. In her

president's report, Lee described how her sensitivity to minister to foreign visitors to the United States increased after she toured a predominantly Muslim Middle Eastern country as an outsider.

Other speakers included

"Sherri," a missionary to an unidentified country, who did not disclose her last name or exact location for safety reasons. She said 1.3 billion people in the least evangelized parts of the world — termed alternately by missions strategists as the

"Final Frontier" or the "10/40 window," have not been reached with the gospel.

"They wait while Christians who have the good news stay at home and choose wallpaper for their kitchen or tomorrow night's menu," Sherri said.

In many remote villages, she related, people are familiar with Coca-Cola products but have never heard about Jesus.

"Does it make you weep," Sherri asked, "that Coca-Cola has made it to places that the name of Jesus hasn't?"

Robert Norris, a director of missions from Littleton, Colo., spoke about his experiences in connection with the Columbine High School shootings. "It's amazing the number of times God's name has been mentioned since April 20," he said.

Calvin Miller, a religion professor at Samford University in Birmingham, closed one session with a message titled "Trust His Rich Promises of Grace."

Miller reminded WMU members that this time 100 years ago women were fighting for suffrage. Today, women are at the forefront of mission organizations, he said.



TRIBUTE — Dellanna O'Brien, retiring executive director of the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), is overcome with emotion June 14 as she listens to people give testimonies of praise and thanksgiving for her many years of work with the WMU, an auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention. (BP photo by Gibbs Frazier)

Stewart elected to Pastors' Conference post

ATLANTA (Special and local reports) — The Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference examined a range of issues as they explored how to be "empowered for tomorrow" during their 1999 annual meeting, June 13-14 in Atlanta, and also elected a Mississippi pastor as conference vice-president for the second consecutive year.

Clark Stewart, pastor of Harmony Church, Crystal Springs, was elected by acclamation after he was the only nominee for the post of vice-president. He replaces Thomas Atwood, pastor of First Church, Oxford.

New conference President Jerry Sutton called on Christians to experience God's glory by seeking it in prayer and securing it in power so that they may see it in practice.

Experiencing God's glory in prayer involves taking on a humble posture before God, which is a holy privilege, said Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers Church in Nashville, Tenn.

To secure God's glory in power, Christians must utilize the resources of God to be empowered concretely out of God's riches, to be indwelt considerably by Christ, to be enlightened completely in understanding the love of Christ, and to be in-filled completely with the fullness of God, he added.

When believers seek the glory of God in this way, Sutton said, they will see it in practice.

Pastors must recognize positive cultural changes, urged Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship in Washington, D.C.

"The signs are beginning to turn our way," he said, pointing to decreases in the numbers of abortions, welfare recipients, crimes, and teen pregnancies.

"This is going to be a great period of Christian renewal in the new millennium," Colson added. "...Modern men and women have run out of (other) options."

Too many Christians are unavailable for service to God because they have been distracted by the things of the world, Christian financial counselor Larry Burkett claimed.

"In large part, the army of God has deserted the ranks," said Burkett, president and founder of Christian Financial Concepts.

Citing a laundry list of statistics, Burkett said Christians' financial situations prove

they are trying to "serve God and mammon."

"They are no longer available to the one who has enlisted them," he noted.

"At some point, we—God's people who are in positions of leadership—have to ask God's people, 'How much is enough?'"

The ultimate issue is putting one's life under God's control, he said. To help, churches can teach God's principles for handling money, require a pre-marital budgeting class for every couple desiring to get married, and require couples to be mentored for at least a year after marriage.

Americans need to pray for America until Bill Clinton no longer is president, insisted Richard Land, president of the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

He displayed a copy of a recent presidential proclamation that designates June as the beginning of "Gay and Lesbian Month," encouraging Americans to observe it with appropriate programs. The audience erupted with cheers and applause when Land said the program Americans really need is to pray for the nation until Clinton is no longer president.

All ministers must deal with difficulty and brokenness, reported Jimmy Draper, president of the SBC's LifeWay Christian Resources. Using 2 Corinthians 4:1-2 as a text, he offered a recipe for how to minister without losing heart.

Ministers must begin by renouncing all secret things, shameful things, subtle things, and selfish things, he said. There must be no hidden agendas in the pastor's heart: pastors must be what they claim to be.

◆ Florida evangelist Jay Strack challenged pastors to seek God's vision and provide real spiritual leadership in the troubling times in which they live.

Strack, preaching from Habakkuk 2:1-4, titled his sermon "vision@work.com," and utilized a number of computer world analogies. He said the "hardware" of personal vision is that vision must be requested, revealed, received, and recorded, as was the case with Habakkuk.

The "software" of personal vision, Strack said, includes intimacy, isolation, integrity, imagination, intensity, involvement, and investment, as Habakkuk demonstrated.

"Let's do the greatest things we've ever

done for the glory of the Lord," Strack said in closing.

◆ Georgia motivational speaker John C. Maxwell challenged pastors to be true leaders in difficult times.



"The greatest leaders all rose because it was the darkest hour for their nation. Every change calls for a courageous leader," he said.

◆ Rather than murmur, God's people should remember God's provision, presence, protection, and power, instructed Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee.

"I long to be a part of God doing something in our midst that would be inexplicable to the minds of men," Chapman said.

"In our lifetimes there's been no revival to sweep America," he lamented. "How I pray that God would bring revival among us that would turn our world rightside up."

◆ International Mission Board president Jerry Rankin said the International Mission Board commissioned 885 new missionaries last year, and overseas baptisms rose from 300,000 to 348,000.

"Jesus has given us a mandate to go unto all the world and disciple all nations," he stressed.

"We go only in the power of the gospel and with a vision of winning the lost nations of the world to Jesus and to the glory of God."

EMPOWERED — Mississippi music evangelist Luke Garrett performs June 14 under the banner reflecting the theme of the 1999 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference meeting in the Georgia Dome in Atlanta. The annual pastors' conference is traditionally held prior to the start of the Southern Baptist Convention. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Chechnyan pastor killed; leaders missing

HAMBURG, Germany (BP) — Russian Baptist leaders have confirmed earlier reports that Aleksandr Kulakov, 65, a Baptist pastor in Grozny, Chechnya, has been beheaded, according to a report in European Baptist Press Service April 22.

His head was reportedly displayed in an open market area, and police invited church members to come to a public morgue and try to identify his body.

Volodya Kargiev, youth leader of the Central Church in Vladikavkaz, has also been reported as kidnapped by Chechnyan bandits. A \$100,000 ransom has been demanded for his release, according to a report in Baptist Times on April 8. Two Orthodox priests were also kidnapped in Chechnya the first week in April, one of them taken from his church altar by four men with machine guns, according to the Baptist Times.

HERE TO SERVE YOU

The men and women here at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board are here to serve you. In our monthly staff meeting we spend some time trying to paint a picture of the work of the last 30 days, and we look at the frame in which future pictures will be painted.

A couple of months ago I requested that the departments and teams include in their report every event, conference, mission project, witness encounter, and personal counseling that took place. While part of this is included monthly, I wanted to see as complete a picture as possible for one month.

Most of the time, when we think of the Baptist Building here in our state, that is what we think of — a building, located on the corner of Mississippi and State Streets in Jackson, where people come daily and sit in offices answering the phones and, well, beyond that we may not be sure.

I can assure you that this is



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

not the case and is a distorted view of the Convention Board work. We are here to serve you! The men and women at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board form a ministry team to help in every way possible — to support, encourage, and enable our associations and churches to carry out the ministry of Jesus.

The news reports were turned in for just one month. It painted a picture of a sincere and impressive effort all across our state. Let me summarize and give you the picture by the numbers:

208 — The number of events in one month planned by, or led

by, Convention Board staff.

20,000+ — The number of people involved in these events.

3,500+ — The number of churches that participated in these events.

Every — The number of associations that were touched by, or visited by some Convention Board personnel.

986 — The number of professions of faith reported from events.

These events range from "Celebrate Jesus" rallies to Jail Ministry training. They include Bible drills, budget emphasis, and building consultations.

They also include music ministry, missions, and administration. Involved were people from every age sector of society and virtually every race, color, and ethnic group in Mississippi.

The report reflects only one month, but is a snapshot of the team of ministers here at the Convention Board involved in seeking to support the Lord's work in every sector of Mississippi.

I wanted to share that picture with you for two reasons:

◆ to remind you that if there is any way that we can assist you in your association, or in your church, or in your region, you need only to let us know, and...

◆ so that you will know that if you call and the person for whom you are looking is not sitting at his or her desk, most likely it means that they are out involved in ministry or a mission event, but still would love to hear from you and help you with your need or with your plans.

We are here to serve you.

U.S. Women's Open Vols

The following churches provided volunteers for the U. S. Women's Open held the first week in June at Old Waverly Golf Club in West Point:

- Calvary Church, Columbus
- Fairview Church, Columbus
- Mt. Vernon Church, Columbus
- First Church, Starkville
- Harrisburg Church, Tupelo
- First Church, Macon
- Mantee Church, Mantee
- First Church, Kosciusko
- New Salem Church, Columbus
- Mt. Comfort Church, Bruce
- Cedar Bluff Church, Cedar Bluff
- First Church, West Point
- First Church, Maben
- Blythe Creek Church, Mathiston
- Pleasant Hill Church, Olive Branch
- Parkway Church, Houston
- First Presbyterian Church, West Point
- Liberty Church, Union Association



SHOWING THE WAY — Marques Fletcher (center), minister of evangelism at Atlanta's Mount Zion Second Baptist Church, leads Cornelius Allen (left) in a profession of faith June 11 during a Crossover block party sponsored by Fletcher's church in Atlanta's Coan Park. Allen's friend, Shadrach Roper, looks on. (BP photo by Bill Bangham)

Columbine 'martyr' honored during SBC

By John D. Pierce, managing editor
Georgia Christian Index

ATLANTA (Special) — Messengers enduring to the end of Tuesday's full Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting schedule saw and heard a presentation from the North American Mission Board (NAMB) portraying the challenges of ministry and applauded the parents of a Columbine High School victim who was killed after professing her faith.

"We weren't perfect parents, and our children weren't perfect," said Brad Bernall, who along with his wife, Misty, received an extended standing ovation from messengers when introduced by NAMB President Bob Reccord.

The Bernalls' daughter, Cassie, has become well known for her courageous confession of faith in the Littleton, Colo., high school library before being gunned down by one of two fellow students who took the lives of 12 students and a teacher as well as their own April 20.

"Our kids have no right to privacy," said Brad Bernall, who suggested parents check the bedrooms of teenagers for "indicators" of serious problems. He said it was

through difficult acts of parental "tough love" that their daughter embraced the Christian faith after toying with destructive behavior.

"An incredible outpouring of support" from within and outside the church has enabled the family to endure the loss of their 17-year-old daughter and to be able to encourage other parents of teens, said Misty Bernall.

The NAMB presentation began with a prayer for Reccord who is being treated for back pain. He expressed appreciation for the group's concern before focusing on the challenges that face America and the



COLUMBINE MEMORIAL — Frontliners from Sugarland, Texas, hold up 13 crosses at the Gettin' Free Youth Concert June 12 in Atlanta's Centennial Olympic Park, sponsored by the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists. The 13 crosses represent the people killed in the Columbine school massacre. (BP photo by Jim Yates)

Messengers send name-change proposal to defeat

By Bill Webb, editor
Missouri Word and Way

ATLANTA (Special) — Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) messengers declined June 15 to take a straw poll on whether they favor a name change for the SBC.

Blaine Barber, a messenger from Agape Baptist Church in Petoskey, Mich., asked messengers "to consider changing the name of the SBC to the International Baptist Convention" and to vote on it

by ballot for the purpose of a non-binding straw poll, with the results to inform further study.

After a show of uplifted ballots, SBC President Paige Patterson declared the motion had been overwhelmingly defeated.

"The goal of many of us who serve in the North and other areas outside the Bible belt is to build an even greater denomination," Barber said. "A name change will open doors to church planting and building healthy churches. It will bring in a new era in our denomination."

"The (SBC) Executive Committee said there was no compelling reason for a change," he said, referring to a recent decision by that body—of which he is a member—to decide against acting on two name-change motions referred to it at last year's convention.

However, Barber said he sees two compelling reasons for a name change. The first reason is a biblical principle, he said, citing Paul's example to "become all things to all men." Barber referenced Acts 16:1-3, where Paul had Timothy circumcised to avoid offending the Jews to whom they would minister.

"Now Paul did whatever was needed to overcome or break down any barriers to the witness of Christ. It would be painful for many of you to change the name of the SBC, but I can assure you it wouldn't be as painful as it was for Timothy," Barber said to laughter and applause.

"Reason No. 2 is racial reconciliation," he said. Noting one Southern state did not ratify the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution banning slavery until 1995, Barber said: "We have the opportunity to do in Atlanta more than just make a resolution for racial reconciliation. We must take a giant leap into the next millennium that would break down the walls of racism. If we're going to reach the black communities of North America, we should not be that slow in bringing about change."

Only one messenger spoke against Barber's motion before time for floor debate expired.

"Southern Baptist is a term for a theology, not a term for a location," said Jeff Johnson of Central Baptist Church in Grants, N.M. "It is a term we've

come to respect."

Another messenger, James McCullen of First Baptist Church in Mountain View, Mo., proposed an amendment to change the name in Barber's motion from "International Baptist Convention" to "Scriptural Baptist Convention."

"We have turned our convention to Scripture and to the inerrancy of Scripture," he said. "Why not have everybody know that we are the Scriptural Baptist Convention?"

Then churches would not have to change the acronym "SBC" on their signs and stationery, he said. His amendment was defeated.

Even though the Executive Committee had studied the matter of a name change and in February adopted its report finding "no compelling rationale" for one, Barber pressed his case in the committee's June 14 pre-convention meeting.

The Executive Committee overwhelmingly rejected his motion to recommend a name change in its report to the convention the next day.

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'Blue-ribbon committee' to review BF&M

By Mark Wingfield, assoc. ed.
Texas Baptist Standard

ATLANTA (Special) — A "blue ribbon committee" will be appointed by Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Paige Patterson to review the entirety of the Baptist Faith & Message (BF&M) doctrinal statement and recommend revisions next June.

This opportunity for thorough revision comes on the heels of last year's addition of an article on family to the statement. That addition, approved by messengers to the 1998 SBC annual meeting in Salt Lake City, was the first revision of the Baptist Faith & Message in 35 years.

That revision was not enough, according to T.C. Pinckney of Virginia, who made the motion for the review committee to be appointed.

Alluding to the recent battle between conservatives and moderates for control of the SBC, Pinckney noted that the 36 years since the Baptist Faith & Message was last thoroughly revised "have been momentous ones" for the SBC.

"I believe it is appropriate at this time that the Baptist Faith & Message be reviewed and that it be made consistent with the current stand of the Southern Baptist Convention," he said.

Pinckney, a member of Good News Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va., is a retired Air Force general who has been a key advocate of the conservative movement in the SBC. He also was influential in forming a new state convention in Virginia called Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia and now serves as editor of that convention's newspaper, the Baptist Banner.

During the opening session of the SBC annual meeting in Atlanta June 15, Pinckney made the motion for the SBC president "to review the Baptist Faith & Message statement

with the responsibility to report and bring any recommendations to this meeting next June in Orlando."

During the scheduled time for debate, no one spoke in opposition to the motion.

However, A.J. Smith of Macedonia Baptist Church in Dry Ridge, Ky., spoke in support of the motion. "Southern Baptists need a statement of faith that is precise and unambiguous," he said.

Pinckney's motion as adopted gave no parameters on who should serve on the review committee or how many people should serve. Last year's addition on family was drafted by a seven-member committee appointed by then-SBC President Tom Elliff. The 1963 committee was comprised of the 24 sitting presidents of state Baptist conventions then affiliated with the SBC.

The 1963 committee, chaired by Herschel Hobbs of Oklahoma, based its work on the original version of the Baptist Faith & Message adopted by the SBC in 1925. The 1925 version, drafted by a committee of eight elected by the convention, drew heavily upon the New Hampshire Confession of Faith, one of several historic confessions of faith used by Christians.

The 1925 committee included Baptist luminaries such as E.Y. Mullins, president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and L.R. Scarborough, president of Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth.

The idea of adopting what appeared to some as a creed was controversial among Baptists at the time. However, convention leaders thought the step was necessary to head off criticisms by J. Frank Norris, a Texas pastor and legendary Fundamentalist who had been attacking the convention and stirring controversy.

Aside from last year's revision to include a section on

family, several attempts have been made in recent years to amend the statement's section on Scripture. One such motion was made at last year's annual meeting and was referred to the SBC Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee reported to the convention this year that it had studied the request, in consultation with the presidents of the six SBC seminaries, and determined no action should be taken at this time.

Pinckney's motion, however, opens the door for revision not only of the article on Scripture — the point over which Southern Baptists fought bitterly from 1979 to 1991 — but for revision of any other article, as well as the possible addition or deletion of articles.

While Pinckney's motion was the most far-reaching one acted upon by messengers at the Atlanta meeting, it was one of 38 motions presented from the convention floor. Of those 38, only four were scheduled for convention debate, four were ruled out of order and 30 were referred to various SBC agencies and institutions for further review.

The four motions scheduled for debate included Pinckney's, one by Blaine Barber of Michigan calling for a straw poll of messengers on whether to change the convention's name, and two by Wiley Drake of California.

One of Drake's motions requested the convention to communicate its disapproval of President Clinton's recent proclamation on gay and lesbian pride month and another requested a letter be sent to the American Psychological Association denouncing a recent journal article on child sexual abuse. Both of Drake's concerns were addressed in resolutions adopted by the convention.

Two of the motions ruled out of order demanded that Immanuel Church in Little Rock, Ark., discipline Clinton for his stands on homosexuality and other social issues.

The third asked that the SBC "disband itself" from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, something the committee on order of business ruled was not possible because the SBC has no formal connection to the break-away moderate group.

Falwell prays at SBC



Virginia pastor and Liberty University chancellor Jerry Falwell (right) prepares to pray at the close of a session of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting June 15-16 in the Georgia Dome in Atlanta. SBC president Paige Patterson (left), who was elected to a second one-year term at the meeting, introduced Falwell to the messengers in attendance. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

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(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

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JUST FOR THE RECORD

Woodville Heights Church, Jackson, will celebrate its 40th anniversary, June 25-27. The weekend will begin with a Friday and Saturday night dinner theatre presentation of "Mayberry 2001." Tickets are available at the church office for \$10 each. Carl Savell, who served as pastor from 1967-1985, will preach during the Sunday morning worship service. A reunion choir, composed of present and former members will sing as well as a quartet of

former ministers of music. Following a covered dish lunch, there will be a time of fellowship. For more information, call the church at (601) 372-5443.

A retirement reception will be held at Ephesus Church, Forest, for Kenneth Jones, pastor, and his wife Thenetia on June 27. The reception will be from 3-5 p.m. in the fellowship hall.

Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, will host a mission banquet on June 26 at 6 p.m. The banquet is one of several events that will help to enable a senior adult mission team go to England, Aug. 19-Sept. 1, to teach in holiday Bible clubs, at invitation of the British Baptist Union and the International Mission Board. For more information, call the church at (601) 924-5620.

Old Union Church, Shannon, will host a picnic and have activities on July 4 starting at 4 p.m. Kenneth Kelly is pastor. For more information, call the church at (601) 767-8831.



Youth of Liberty Church, Union Association, and their leaders, Terry and Dana Pickens, worked parking cars for the Women's Open at Old Waverly Golf Course in West Point. Youth pictured (from left) with golfer Jimin Kang are Josh Forsyth, Michael Pickens, Michael Seger, Kellie Pickens, and Jenny Tate.



New Liberty Church, Scott Association, held a note burning for its new pastorage during the evening worship service on Feb. 14. Pictured with the pastor are the deacons and trustees of the church.



Bethel Church, Water Valley, held its "Deacon Appreciation Ceremony" on April 25. Honored (from left) were Quay Jones and his wife Ima; Herman Champion and his wife Louise; and Wade Doolin and his wife Sue. James Edwards is pastor. Each deacon was presented a plaque of appreciation for his years of service.

STAFF CHANGES

Tom Sumrall, pastor of First Church of Glendale, Hattiesburg, has resigned to accept an overseas assignment with the International Mission Board. The resignation became effective on June 20. He will assume the pastorate of International Baptist Church, St. Johns, Antigua, West Indies. He and his wife Jane will also be involved in a camp and sports ministry. The Sumralls previously served as missionaries in Brazil from 1977-81. Before going to Hattiesburg, Sumrall was pastor of First Church, New Albany.



Sumrall

with a bachelor degree in general studies. His major was pastoral ministries.

Ed Nix has resigned as business administrator-associate pastor of First Church, Columbus, to join the staff of First Church, Fisherville, in Shelby County, Tenn., on July 1.

First Church, Maben, has called **Andrew G. Pittman** as pastor effective May 9. He previously served as associate pastor/college minister at First Church, Woodway, Waco, Texas. Pittman is a native of Tupelo and received his education at Mississippi College and George W. Truett Theological Seminary of Baylor University.



Pittman

Michael Lee Giles has been called as pastor of Branch Church, Morton. He was ordained to the ministry by First Church, Richland, on March 14. In May he graduated from New Orleans Seminary.



Giles

VBS dates

Union, Brandon: June 27-30; Sunday, 5-8:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 6-8:30 p.m.; Brent Bozeman, pastor.

Oak Forest, Jackson: June 26-July 1; activities begins at 6 p.m. on Saturday; Sunday, 6-8:30 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 6-8:30 p.m. with complimentary light supper provided each evening (except Sunday); for transportation or additional information, call (601) 372-2021.



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Patterson to serve second presidential term

By Marv Knox, editor
Texas Baptist Standard

ATLANTA (Special) — Paige Patterson received a second term at the helm of the Southern Baptist Convention June 15, when messengers to the SBC's annual meeting re-elected him as president without opposition.

SBC messengers also elected Georgia pastor Frank Cox as first vice-president and Alabama pastor Jerry Spencer as second vice-president.

Patterson "served us well" in the past year as SBC president, stressed Junior Hill, an evangelist and member of Westmeade Church in Decatur, Ala., who nominated him.

Patterson, 56, is thoughtful, wise, tempered, restrained, and "uncompromising in his call for biblical righteousness and New Testament evangelism," Hill said. He cited the rapid growth and "spirit of revival" that has characterized Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., under Patterson's leadership as president the past seven years.

Patterson helped design the 20-year movement that turned the SBC in a more conservative direction. As president, Patterson exhibited positive leadership in several areas, Hill said.

"Southern Baptists have seen a side of this gifted man many did not know existed," he explained. He cited Patterson's

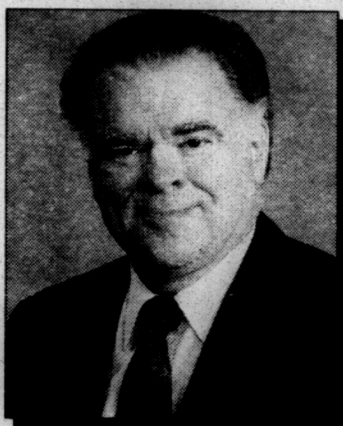
abilities as a preacher, his call to start churches and reach cities with the gospel, and his challenge to baptize 500,000 new Christians in America in one year's time.

"Dr. Paige Patterson has challenged us to rise to a new level," Hill said. "I, for one, never have been more happy to be called a Southern Baptist. I am excited we have a man like Dr. Paige Patterson to be our leader."

Before becoming president of Southeastern Seminary, Patterson was president of Criswell College in

Dallas, associate pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas.

Cox, senior pastor of North Metro First Baptist Church in suburban Atlanta, also was elected without opposition.



Patterson

"He has Baptists on his heart and will be fully supportive of Dr. Paige Patterson," pledged James Merritt, pastor of First Church in Snellville, Ga., who nominated him.

Cox is a former president of the Georgia Baptist Convention and is a member of the SBC Executive Committee.

Spencer, pastor of Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Dothan, Ala., won the second vice presidency over Paul Russell, pastor of Sunridge Church in Seabring, Fla. Spencer received 1,817 votes (52%) to 1,706 for Russell (48%).

Messengers also elected two secretaries for the convention. John Yeats, editor of the Baptist Messenger, the weekly newspaper of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, was re-elected recording secretary without opposition.

Incumbent Registration Secretary Lee Porter of the Atlanta area won re-election over former foreign missionary Teresa Norris of Denver, who was nominated by Thomas Atwood, pastor of First Church, Oxford.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

William Carey College Center for Creative Scholars will present the eighth annual Creativity Exploration for 2nd through 6th graders July 19-21, and for 7th through 12th graders July 20-22 from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Registration will be held from 8:30-9 a.m. on July 19 for 2nd through 6th graders, and from 8:30-9 a.m. on July 20 for 7th through 12th graders. For more information, call Trudy Abel at (601) 582-6191 or write The Center for Creative Scholars,

Box 148, 498 Tuscan Avenue, Hattiesburg, MS 39401.

Randall Harris, associate professor of biology at William Carey College, has been appointed to succeed B. J. Martin as chair of the Department of Biological Sciences and to serve as interim dean of the School of Arts, Humanities, and Sciences. Harris, who has served as associate professor of biology at Carey since 1994, received his education at Belmont University and

Vanderbilt University. Martin, who has served as chair since 1992, will continue to teach as professor of biology.

Mississippi College and The Milton Center at Newman University have joined forces to present a Christian writer's conference, "Words to Wield This Wonder," July 7-11. Workshops will be held each morning, Thursday through Sunday of the conference. Each afternoon and evening, the writers will give readings from their current works and talks about the writing process. The highlight of this part of the conference will be the keynote address by New York Times best-selling author Anne Lamott on July 8 at 7 p.m. in Swor Auditorium. For more information contact David Miller at (601) 925-3215. All afternoon and evening readings are free. Space is limited for morning workshops. A reservation fee of \$60 is required.

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PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC mail or E-mail resume to: Search Committee, Bethel Baptist Church, 2153 Bethel Road, Liberty, MS 39645 or oakknoll@telepak.net. **PART-TIME MINISTER OF YOUTH** mail or E-mail resume to: Search Committee, Bethel Baptist Church, 2153 Bethel Road, Liberty, MS 39645 or oakknoll@telepak.net.

Mississippians graduate from Southwestern

Students claiming Mississippi as their home state graduated from Southwestern Seminary during Spring commencement May 15. Receiving doctoral degrees were L. Lavon Gray, Mendenhall, and John M. Jordan, Columbus. Other students receiving master's degrees were Tammy A. Baker, Hattiesburg; Elizabeth Le Bishop, Pearl; Robin E. Burgin, Starkville; Preston C. Crowe; Christopher M. Davis; Angella L. Elkins, Southaven; John A. Miller, Collinsville; Aubrey D. Parker, Laurel; Kathy N. Sanson, Raleigh; Deborah A. Simmons; Stephen L. Smith, Pascagoula; Mark J. Vincent, Agricola; and Carson E. Whitehead, Ridgeland.

Correction

In the article headlined "TV special focuses on Christians in NBA" on page 12 of the June 17 issue, the working title of the television special was listed as "Layup Treasures." The title was changed to "Hoop Heroes" in the final editing process.

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Mississippians receive degrees from Beeson

Several graduates with Mississippi ties are among May graduates of Beeson Divinity School, Samford University. Commencement was held May 22. The 62-member Beeson class, which includes December graduates, is the largest since Beeson was founded in 1988. Mississippi graduates were Grant Alan Arinder, Belzoni, doctor of ministry; Kenneth Raymond Hester, Mantee, doctor of ministry; William Eldridge Conner, Houston, master of divinity; and Thomas Christian Howell, Cleveland, master of divinity.

Holcomb Church, North

Central Association, recently licensed Jeff Byars to the ministry. He serves the church as minister of music and youth. Pictured with Byars (left) is Randy Ashley, pastor.



Byars and Ashley

James D. Whittington is available for supply, interim, and revivals. His new address is 519 Walker Lane, Raymond, MS 39154 or call (601) 857-8021.

Calvary Church, Belmont, licensed Tim Stormont to the ministry on Feb. 7. Pictured with Stormont (right) is Ray Kirk, pastor.



Kirk and Stormont



Roseland Park Church, Picayune, recently ordained Robert Herrin II. He has been called as pastor to First Church, Delisle. Pictured (from left) are John Brock, pastor, Roseland Park Church; Herrin; and Paul Dabdoub, president, Slidell Baptist Seminary.

REVIVAL DATES

Friendship, McComb: July 11-14; Sunday, 11 a.m., noon luncheon, and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Tues., 7 p.m.; Wed., noon luncheon and 7 p.m.; Bill Webb, Meridian, evangelist; Hubert Greer, Wesson, music; LaVerne Summerlin, pastor.

Pine Level, Leakesville: July 12-14; 7 p.m.; Kenneth Overby, former pastor, evangelist; Bill Ricks, music; Mitch Osborne, pastor.

Providence, Meadville: June 27-July 2; 7 p.m.; Randall Jackson, Morton, evangelist; Danny Creel, McComb, music; Cletus Moak, pastor.

Weathersby, Mendenhall: June 27-30; 7 p.m.; Jerry Doggett, Mendenhall, evangelist; Donald Walker, Magee, music; Foy Killingsworth, pastor.

Mt. Moriah, Bogue Chitto: July 18-22; 7 p.m.; Talmadge Smith, Brookhaven, evangelist; Tim Duane, former minister of music at Mt. Moriah Church, music; Danny Moss, pastor.

Antioch, Brandon: July 25-29; Sunday, 7 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Chuck Herring, Richland, evangelist; Marion Spence, pastor.

New Zion, Walnut Grove: July 12-15; 7 p.m.; Jerry Reed, Pascagoula, evangelist; Greg Renfrow, pastor.

Vaiden (Carroll-Montgomery): July 4-8; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Perry Neal, Montgomery, Ala., evangelist; Joe Styron, Kilmichael, music; Leon Holly, pastor.

HOMEcomings

Southside, Vicksburg: July 11; 15th anniversary; Greg Clemts, pastor, will deliver the message at 10:50 a.m.; covered dish dinner in fellowship hall with singing to follow.

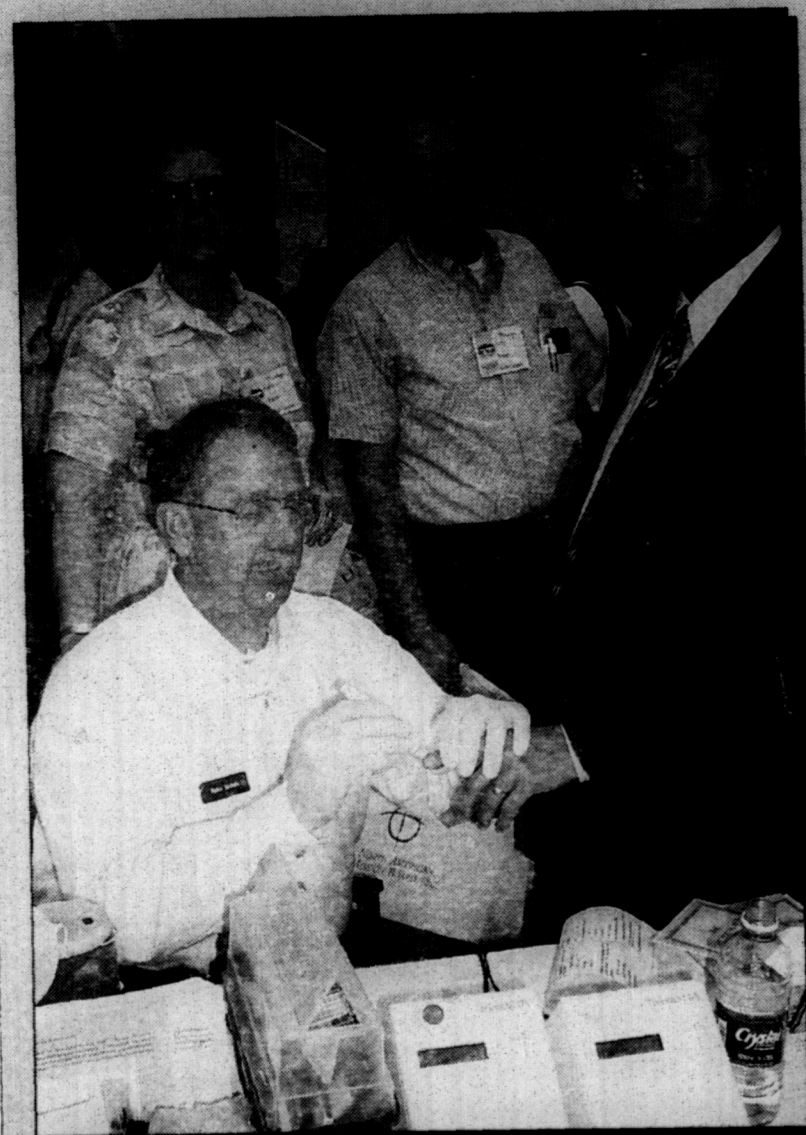
Pine Level, Leakesville: July 11; 85th anniversary; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; covered dish luncheon in fellowship hall following worship services; 1:30 p.m. service; Kenneth Overby, former pastor,

speaker; Bill Ricks, music; Mitch Osborne, pastor.

Crooked Creek, Silver Creek: Aug. 1; covered dish following morning services; L. C. Anthony, speaker; Magnolia State, music.

Antioch, Brandon: July 25; 11 a.m.; covered dish in fellowship hall at noon; Larry Duncan, Walnut Grove, guest speaker; Marion Spence, pastor.

Stickin' it to 'em



Robin Nichols (seated), Mississippi's Annuity Board representative, draws blood June 15 from Curtis Rice, pastor of First Church in Farmington, Ky., at the Annuity Board exhibit at the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta. The Annuity Board provided a variety of health tests for people attending the convention in the Georgia Dome. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

My pastor husband spends so much time on church matters that could be handled by others, that our family suffers from his absence. He gets upset with me when I mention this, so what can I do?

This is a commonly-heard cry from pastors' families. Pastors and churches please take note: The problem here centers around the issue of boundaries and expectations — both of which often are not communicated and/or expressed. Most men called into the ministry desire to please others, and they have learned that working hard meets this need for approval. Learning to set boundaries is done by saying "No." Expectations come into play as

the church demands the pastor be "all things to all people." This may not be openly expressed, but how often does a pastor hear, "I am so glad to see you spending extra time with your family this week?" Pastors, like all people, need praise for the right things. As a pastor's wife, when was the last time you told your husband, "Thank you for taking the time to eat supper with us tonight?" That may seem small, but it's a start. As he begins to feel your praise (rather than nagging), he can turn the ship around and minister to you like you expect him to do. He is in a rut, and it takes time to get out of a rut. Pray for him, get on his team, and acknowledge the positive things he does do for the family.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

New beginning

Genesis 6:5-8; 7:1-4; 9:12-17

By Grant Arinder

"The Lord saw. So the Lord said....But Noah" (Gen. 6:5-8).

These three simple phrases serve as guideposts on the trail of understanding this passage. After reading these three phrases the reader understands exactly what is taking place in the text. God sees the wickedness of the people, so he pronounces judgement upon them, but he finds favor in Noah. In this week's lesson we will study Gen. 6:5-8 letting these phrases point the way.

The Lord saw (v. 5). These often-times overlooked words are so simple, yet so profound. From the very beginning

mankind has acted as if God were blind to our sin (cf. 3:6; 4:8). Somehow we have fallen prey to the erroneous belief that all is well if we conceal our sin from our fellow man. So we cover up our physical tracks and pretend spiritually that God does not see.

I remember teaching my son, Garrison, to play "hide and seek." He was only two at the time. What an infantile understanding he had of the game. I used to count and tell him to go hide.

At the beginning his hiding skills were not so great and often when I would ask, "Where are you," he would answer, "I'm hiding behind the



Arinder

chair." On one occasion he was wearing a baseball cap. When I told him to go hide, he sat down in a corner and pulled the cap down over his eyes.

His act was so cute, yet so uninformed. Garrison believed that as long as he could not see me, I could not see him.

Yet, his father could see him as our Father sees us.

Since the beginning we have been hiding from God (Gen. 3:8). Perhaps we think we have pulled the cap over God's eyes. The truth is, the only person that can't see is us. When we hide from God we are like Garrison in the corner sitting in plain view of God, yet blind to the fact that he sees our every move. Gen. 6:5 reminds us that God indeed sees.

Although we may not realize it, his divine awareness is both

a warning and a blessing. In Exodus 3:7 the Lord tells Moses, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people....So I have come down to rescue them." God not only sees, he acts.

So the Lord said (v. 7). In Exodus 3:7 we read that God "saw the suffering of his people....So God rescued them." His divine act to rescue his people was based on his divine awareness of their plight. God saw, so God acted.

In Gen. 6 we read that God saw something much different — something that broke his heart. The text reveals that God's actions were not primarily based on anger or wrath, but on the profound grief that flooded his heart. The Lord saw his children turning from his love and his ways, "So the Lord said." Again, God's divine actions were predicated on his divine awareness. This text should remind us that God's

treatment is not arbitrary. In times of need, God sees and God acts. Also, in times of rebellion God sees and God acts.

But Noah (v. 8). One of the greatest themes of the Old Testament is that of the remnant, the faithful few who persevere in righteousness even when surrounded and attacked by evil temptations from all sides.

Noah is one of the remnant. One theme is constant in Gen. 6 and 7, that is, "Noah did all that the Lord commanded" (6:8-9, 22; 7:5,9). God saw....So God said....but Noah.

We, like Noah, live in a degraded and defiled world, surrounded by evil and its effects. What this country needs is a whole lot more, "But Noahs," people who find favor in God's eyes because they are doing, "all that the Lord commanded."

Arinder is pastor of First Church, Belzoni.

LIFE AND WORK

Renew Your Service

Malachi 3:13-4:6

By Tony Martin

Hear the universal cry of a pre-teen when things don't go their way: "It's not fair!" And the universal cry of the parent? "Who ever said that life was fair?"

We've heard this, and perhaps we've said it. What sounds banal is actually quite true. It does seem that life is often unfair, even for Christians.

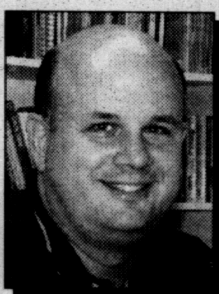
Look around. Evil seems to win, the wicked seem to be victorious, and those of us who hold heartfelt convictions seem isolated and "out of it." Frankly, it's often tempting just to go along with the crowd and not fight cultural and societal trends. In those dark moments

we say, "Why bother? Being faithful sure hasn't made me any better off than anyone else."

The truth is that God will correct wrongs in his own time. God knows, claims, and rewards those who continue to serve him, even if life sometimes may seem to go better for those who don't.

Malachi dealt with these same issues. He answers the question: "Why should I continue to serve God when life seems to go better for those who don't?"

Appearances are deceiving (3:13-15). God called Judah to account for saying harsh things about himself personally. In a pattern seen throughout this



Martin

whole book, the people answer God's accusations with a snide, whining question: "What have we said against you?" knowing full well that they've been unfaithful. The answer was simple. "You have said, 'It is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going

about like mourners before the Lord Almighty?'" Their complaint was that following God made no difference in their lives, but appearances are deceiving. The people had chosen to set God aside as irrelevant. They would go through the routine of showing up at the temple and giving the appearance of godliness. But in their hearts, there was no real commitment to God, and dire consequences would result from their disobedience.

God knows and claims his own (3:16-4:3). There is always a remnant! Even in the most carnal

of situations, God finds a group who "gets it." Even as the society of Malachi's day refused to turn to God, there were individuals who "listened and heard." Malachi stated that their names were recorded in God's record book. "They will be mine," God said. Those who served God would be recognized and those who were disobedient would be judged. God always draws a distinction between the righteous and the wicked, and acts in judgement accordingly.

In another sweeping apocalyptic paragraph, Malachi shared a promise. "Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace." All the arrogant would be destroyed like chaff. Those who had "revere his name" would be vindicated. Because of this principle, modern believers should be encouraged to persevere and serve.

God calls for patient faithfulness (4:4-6). Patience can be a difficult virtue, yet we are called to be patient. Malachi

concludes his book with a twofold emphasis. First, he asks the people to remember back to the words of instruction and expectation from Moses. Second, he warns of the coming of the prophet Elijah prior to "that great and dreadful day of the Lord." He would lead the people in turning their hearts toward God once again. But, should the people continue in disobedience, then they would be cursed.

There is a destiny ahead for the good and evil alike. Whether people anticipate the future or not, there's no escaping the reality of the results of the choices we make today. If we remember what we have heard and act accordingly, and are patient in waiting on God, we will be blessed. Even if others seem to have better lives than we do, we understand that God will have the final word in all things.

Tony Martin is minister of education at First Church, McComb.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Don't lose heart

2 Cor. 4:1-15

By Ted Dukes

One of the greatest of all missionaries was David Livingstone. While in Africa he received word from a mission society that they would like to send him some help. They inquired if there were a good road leading to where Livingstone was currently serving. Livingstone wrote: "If you have men who will come only if they know there is a good road, I don't want them. I want men who will come if there is no road." Serving Christ requires a stalwart faith.

Faint not (4:1-6). Building on his words of 3:18, the Apostle Paul says, "Therefore...we faint

not" (4:1). Faith in what God has done implies a holy courage (1 Cor. 16:13) and perseverance (2 Thes. 3:13). Paul is saying, "Don't lose heart!" He repeats this encouragement in verse 16. He gives the only self-commendation that he is willing to give (4:2). They could take it or leave it. Paul has said that there are those who willfully refuse to see the light of the Gospel (3:13-15; 4:3). They hide behind a veil of preferred ignorance (1 Cor. 1:18). Paul attributes this blindness to the "god of this world" (4:4). The word translated in the KJV as world is the Greek "eon," which the NIV better renders "age." He



Dukes

acknowledges the temporary nature of Satan's dominion in his use of this word. There will come a time when this will all change.

Paul's boldness came, not from preaching a personal agenda, but from Christ (4:5). The Apostle makes himself a servant (lit. slave) to all

for Jesus' sake (1 Cor. 9:19), as our Lord commanded (Mat. 20:27). Why else, but for the sake of Christ, would Paul have put himself through the kind of anguish the church at Corinth had caused him? There could be no rational basis for his love of and submission to this church, but that God, who is the Father of lights (Jas. 1:1), sent his son to be the Light of the World (John 8:12). It was that light which left Paul temporarily blinded on the Damascus Road and forever able to see (4:6).

Overcome in the Lord's strength (4:7-11). In Judges 7:16ff the prophet Gideon leads a small band of Israelites into a massive Midianite camp under the cover of darkness, each with a trumpet and a torch hidden within a jar of clay. At the signal the soldiers were to blow the trumpets, shatter the jars, and stand there in a ring about the camp with their torches held aloft. The result was a massacre as the enemy panicked and slaughtered one another. Perhaps this familiar narrative was in back of Paul's mind when he pictured the Gospel light as an inestimable treasure contained within earthen vessels. It was only when those jars were broken and the light was allowed to shine forth that the people of God won the victory against the Midianites. It was only when our Lord was broken and spilled out that our salvation was accomplished. Likewise, it

is only when we are broken and humble before God that our awesome task can be accomplished.

Serve others to the glory of God (4:12-15). The true follower is "killed all the day long" (Rom. 8:36) that we might "also live with him" (2 Tim. 2:11). While death is at work in the Christian, it is for the good of the lost that they suffer, for the result is life for them that come to find Jesus, as had the Corinthians. In verses 10-12 Paul expresses the deep spiritual truth that one suffers for another, even as Jesus on the cross suffered for us and we take up that cross to follow him. Paul quotes Psalm 116:10 (4:13) to express his deep conviction of the aforementioned truth that there is death in life followed by life in death as Christ presents us before the presence of his glory (Jude 24-25).

Dukes is pastor of First Church, Crystal Springs.

Church school leader sees job as 'forever'

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP) — Ed Gamble believes training children is a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, "forever" responsibility.

Gamble, headmaster at The First Academy, a ministry of First Church, Orlando, Fla., said the generic term "Christian education" might mean anything from Sunday School to Wednesday night missions education to Monday-Friday schooling.

In contrast, he speaks of Kingdom education, a term that represents God's expectation of parents for educating children.

A resource used by faculty and staff at The First Academy, "Kingdom Education" published by Life-Way Christian Resources in Nashville, defines the term as "God's plan to educate future generations to develop a God-centered world

view, and, therefore, to think and act according to God's ways."

Gamble reasons, "If we don't educate our own kids, who will? Who is going to teach your worldview? Who is in charge?"

Kingdom education, he continued, "is like planting an orchard. We won't see any fruit for several years. The big crop is down the road. We teach children to function in the kingdom, not to just be good little girls and boys."

Keeping the biblical assignment of training children in the hands of the parents, Gamble admits, is "tough. Historically, we professional educators are the pros. But the relationship between parental involvement and quality education is direct. We're asking them to participate by mentoring, nurturing, and creating an extended family. You need someone else looking out for your kid when you aren't around. When we kingdom educate our kids, then everyone is expected to join in that in a biblical way."

As for the major distinctive between The First Academy and public schools or other kinds of private schools, Gamble said faith and learning are integrated at the academy in a variety of ways.

The academy's mission statement is "Preparing children for life as Christian leaders who choose character before career, wisdom beyond scholarship, service before self, and participation as a way of life."

Some subjects lend themselves to integration of faith better than others, Gamble acknowledges. "It is more difficult in algebra than English literature, but in math you talk about order, which can be illustrated scripturally. What if we teach children both to balance their checkbooks — scholarship — and also to use their resources in ministry and missions — wisdom? This is the integration of learning into faith rather than faith into learning. Faith is the base."

Larry Taylor, assistant to the headmaster and principal of the middle school, said, "we are not just a school that has a chapel. When we begin interviewing families, we make it clear that God's rule is that the responsibility for educating children does not belong to the church or the government or the school, but to the parents. We are clear through our literature that there is a biblical principle of partnership, which is the glue that holds kingdom education together. That is totally integrated in our discipline policy. Everything we do that involves a child's heart includes Mom and Dad."

Taylor said integrating faith topics into school curriculum is a natural process. "Nowhere do I find in scripture that evangelism and discipleship are only done at church. And, we are a part of the church. While we don't teach a month of missions, it's a lifestyle

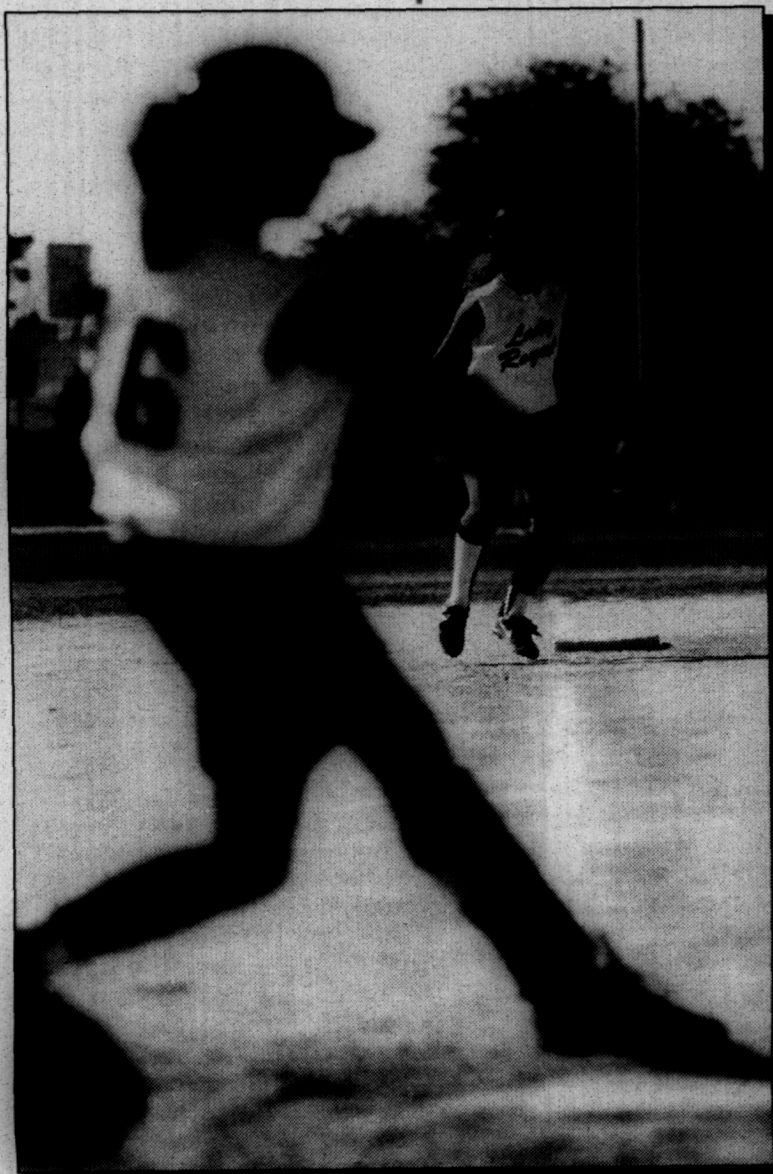
"Our program begins in kindergarten, adopting children of migrant workers to give them toys. Thinking of others is taught at school, home, and church. That, to me, is kingdom education."

Classes are suspended four to five times annually for ministry work. In its most mature form in high school, outreach and evangelism takes the form of mission trip.

Relationships between faculty and students are emphasized, with a balance between grace and law, Taylor said.

"We have to have standards, but through relationships, the biblical principles are internalized. Rules without relationships lead to rebellion. We also believe God's word will not return void. Our ultimate goal is that kids will be Christ-like."

Information about Christian schools and Kingdom education may be obtained by writing to Glen Schultz at glen.schultz@lifeway.com or by calling (615) 251-2147.



GOING FOR HOME — Melody Gamble of The First Academy in Orlando races off third base toward home during a game with another Orlando church team. The Lady Royals is the girls' team and is among the school's varied athletic opportunities for students (BP special photo)

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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XD CXZC HDMTDODCX
ZJU TG HZSCTYDU
GXZMM HD GZODU; HFC
XD CXZC HDMTDODCX
JEC GXZMM HD UZVJDU.
VZBW GTNCDDJ:
GTNCDDJ

Clue: J = N

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Two: Forty-Nine.

Henry: church school fits goals of congregation

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP) — Adding The First Academy as a ministry of Orlando's First Church more than a decade ago fit well with the congregation's goals then and now, pastor Jim Henry said recently.

A part of the thinking that resulted in establishing the academy in 1987 is "the desire to be a seven-day-a-week church, not just facilities to look at, but to use, he recalled.

"We would rather wear our buildings out than to rust them out," he said.

"We began to hear concerns about the quality of public education from a lot of our people. If we did begin a school, we wanted to do it right, making it attractive and church-based. We wanted to keep the school under the church umbrella, but not micro-managed by the pastor."

Several years later, he said, they were confronted with the dilemma of what to do after eighth grade? "Adding a high school was a more difficult decision," he recalled.

"Did we want to do that? If we had no high school, should kids go back to public school earlier than high school in order to get involved? We decided we had gone this far. We needed to finish the job. God honored that, and we have one of the finest Christian high

schools anywhere."

With nearly 1,000 children and a \$6.8 million budget, The First Academy has come a long way from its founding.

A January 1997 survey of 536 families revealed that The First Academy had been instrumental in adding 107 families (approximately 20% of respondents) or 366 adults and children to the First Church roll.

Of all the families at the academy, 37% said the school was instrumental in leading their children to make a profession of faith as well as 3% of the parents. Other responses included that 17% said their children attend church more regularly since attending the academy, five percent of parents indicated their marriages are stronger, and 24% said they are better parents due to the school's influence.

Almost 90% indicated that association with The First Academy had positively impacted their family's spiritual life.

"A lot of the kids will be head and shoul-

ders above their peers," Henry said, "by being able to make right decisions and take a stand. It's worth it."

"If you are a serious Christian, you don't want your children to hear conflicting ideas. If the same feedback

comes from home, school, and church, you get three to one against what they are hearing in the world," he continued.

"While the church had to set aside seed money to begin the academy, Henry said, today the academy supports itself, even reimbursing the church for utilities.

The church contributes \$100,000 for scholarships for children of families in the church.

"If God is in it, it should go," he said. "Like a baby, it took a lot of care. Today, the academy has a foundation. People who will not contribute to a church, we've found, will give to Christian education."

Henry said the school attempts to provide the best curriculum, and if some content is found to be "off-base," teachers use that as a teaching point.

"We've got a Christian faculty, involved in local churches who pray with the kids, support and affirm them, who can give them Christian values."



CHURCH SCHOOL BELIEVER — Jim Henry is pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla. The church established The First Academy as a ministry in response to parental concerns about educational trends.